

T H E

LABYRINTH;

MADAM

I, Robert M. Russell, do hereby certify that you will accept, that you will graciously accept the performance (that is your submission) I have made to your Majesty's test.

FATAL EMBARRASMENT.

To the Marquis of Salisbury, a nobleman who did my dear departed brother owe the original of his first dramatic essay, to your Majesty's submission I have made the ashes of a good man, for the noble Marquis was the deposed for a shield and protection to the only sister, Sister left to me, and as for the

TRAGEDY.

my Brother's genius in the management of his language, I should then speak of the noble Marquis of Downshire, in language which would be worth and my own high sense of it, but alas! the strongest language of the noble Marquis is inadequate to such a task, and the hearts of the noble Marquis are the most faithful records of that nobility which Heaven that inspired, did not allow to be eternal.

PRINTED AND SOLD

FOR THE BENEFIT OF

AGNES STRATFORD,

SISTER OF THE LATE REV. THOMAS STRATFORD,

RECTOR OF GALLSTOWN, CO. WESTMEATH,

Author of LORD RUSSELL, a Tragedy.

Hammond, Printer, St. Martin's Lane.


AGNES STRATFORD.

Dedication.

MADAM,

I TRUST in Heaven that you will accept, that you will *graciously* accept the performance (that by your permission) I now lay at your Ladyship's feet.

To the Marquis of Salisbury's protecting care did my dear departed Brother owe the original life of his first dramatic assay; to your Ladyship's tenderness then, let the ashes of a good man (for such my Brother was) be indebted for a shield and protection to his only Sister, a Sister left totally desolate by his death, and as totally unversed in the ways of the World. Did I partake of my Brother's genius in the same degree I do his gratitude, I should then speak of the late illustrious Marquis of Downshire, in language more suitable to his high worth and my own high sense of it; but, alas! the strongest language of the ablest pen is inadequate to such a task, and the hearts of those his bounty warmed are the most faithful records of that goodness which Heaven that inspired, did also reward with an early fruition of eternal Blessedness.

The greatness of his  was only equalled by the gentleness of his manner as an humble individual, I experienced his condescending goodness, and the tears of gratitude that rush to my eyes at the remembrance, must close a Dedication where the writer's heart is her sole Dictator.

AGNES STRATFORD.

Subscribers Names

TO THE

LABYRINTH,

FATAL EMBARRASSMENT:

A TRAGEDY,

WRITTEN BY A FEMALE AUTHOR.

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P R E F A C E.

THE subject of the present piece, is taken from a Tragedy wrote by that justly-admired French poet and dramatic writer, Monsieur CORNEILLE: The learned reader will observe, that the author has adopted the same characters, and attended to the like management and disposition observed by the French original as to incident and fable; the plot being necessarily constant, he has made the rest his own:—Thus, whilst he has endeavoured to preserve inviolate the reputation of so eminent a French writer, he has likewise been ambitious to assert the superiority of the British drama.—Not many years since Mr. ARTHUR MURPHY, whose genius for dramatic writing is not a little distinguished by a close attention to antient composition, published a Tragedy, which was afterwards represented on the stage entitled “The Rival Sisters”—founded on the like story. In his Preface to which, he tells us, that *he has entered into competition with the French original*; this he has endeavoured to do, by the introduction of new and fictitious machinery. How difficult the attempt, may be collected from the want of success frequently attending such inventions, as thereby the native excellencies of the original

are often concealed from public view,—the passions less forceably touched and awakened, and Nature's best colourings often violated and transgressed; not to mention the unpardonable injury offered to historic tradition, by the misrepresentation of facts: These faults, the author of the present piece has endeavoured principally to avoid, by neither adding to, nor changing the fable on the one part, nor mutilating it on the other, but presenting to the reader, in their true and natural colours, the genuine sentiments and spirit of the original.

For the information of those, that may not be acquainted with the Grecian mythology respecting this piece, the author begs leave to add the following fabulous history, as handed down to us.

In *Athens* and *Megara*, two famous cities in Greece, were instituted public games for the exercise of the youth, and prizes were usually bestowed on those that signalized themselves; here, the princes and nobility, neighbours of these states, frequently resorted, to acquire glory; Androgeos, the son of Minos king of Crete, constantly was present, and had the good fortune most commonly to bear away the prize; the glory which this young prince had obtained inspired his competitors, in *Athens* and *Megara*, with jealousy, who traiterously slew him. King Minos could not suffer such treachery to go unpunished, but instantly raised a considerable army, and assembled all his forces against these two cities, of which he soon made himself master, and obliged those he conquered, to send him every year seven young

young men, and as many young women, the most distinguished in rank, to be shut up prisoners in the Labyrinth, which was a strong prison, the architect whereof was Dedalus, the most ingenious artist of his time, there to be devoured by a cruel monster called the Minotaur;—Dedalus the contriver of this prison, was so expert in mechanics, that it is reported of him, that he had the secret of making himself wings so as to be able to fly with their assistance, and defended the prison so well, that it was impossible to escape from thence, whilst those that were enclosed therein could neither discover nor trace the avenues thereof. The Minotaur was the son of Pasiphaë by Taurus, an inhuman monster, who put to death all those the king confined it. Theseus, was one of those noble Athenians on whom the lot fell, to be sent to Crete, and he was of course exposed to this savage monster; a prince before that time, known for his great valour, and who had all the advantages one could desire in a person of his birth; Ariadne the king's daughter, was touched with his misfortune, and from pity gradually conceived a passion for him, which induced her to embrace the rash resolution of delivering him from the Minotaur, and to provide him with the means of escaping from the Labyrinth, giving him a thread or clue, to direct his steps, and to make his escape, when he should have killed the Minotaur;—Theseus providentially slew this monster, and fled with the Athenian youths, his companions, whom he also delivered; bringing Ariadne with him, to the island of Naxos. Whether

it

it was, that this princess was no longer pleasing to Theseus; or whether as this piece informs us, he conceived other more interesting engagements, he had the cruelty to prove inconstant in love, and to abandon her, forgetful of the great benefits he received from her; and, to compleat his perfidy, left her in this island, and fled in company with her sister Phædra to Athens.—History further tells us, she was at her death translated to the Heavens, amongst the number of constellations.

PROLOGUE.

P R O L O G U E.

*OUR Author, well deserves the name of Rover,
To Crete he travels, for a constant lover,
As if at home, we boasted not enough,
Of truth, fidelity, and such-like stuff:
Had he enquir'd amongst the native fair,
In Britain's empire, he had found him there;
Free from the maze of Labyrinth and evil,
It had been more becoming, and more civil,
But France, he says, the first example taught,
From Greece a matchless maid as heroine sought,
Our Author, sure, should be esteem'd no less,
He cloaths his heroine in an English dress.
A rara avis Ariadne seems,
With all her virtues, Grecian Fable teems!
And tho' one peerless Lady makes such pother,
Tho' scarce in Crete, you could select another,
Our Poet proves, whate'er th' attempt befall,
That * British maids are Ariadnes all;
He sails this night in search of public fame,
And fain your int'rest in his cause would claim,
Yonder's the Labyrinth, where Critics sit!
The Boxes! Gallery! good Lord, the Pit!
To give him courage, rests alone on you,
To save him harmless, you must give the Clue.*

* This Play was originally intended for the English Stage.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M E N.

ENARUS, King of NAXOS.

THESEUS, Son of EGEUS, King of ATHENS.

PERITHOUS, Son of IXION, King of the LAPITHÆ.

ARCAS, an Officer of NAXOS, Friend to ENARUS.

W O M E N.

ARIADNE, Daughter of MINOS, King of CRETE.

PHÆDRA, Sister of ARIADNE.

NERINA, Friend and Confident of ARIADNE,

S C E N E,

The ISLE of NAXOS, and PALACE of ENARUS.

THE
LABYRINTH;
OR,
FATAL EMBARRASSMENT.

ACT I. SCENE I.

ENARUS *and* ARCAS.

ENARUS.

DISTRACTING cares, my Arcas, rend my breast,
And the false gleam of joy which vainly spread
Within my soul a scene of sweet content,
Is now o'ercast with sullen clouds of grief;
Perithous, friend of Theseus, is arriv'd,
His absence, but deferr'd the bridegroom's lot
And promis'd nuptials—all my hopes expire,
Fed by delay, and nourish'd by occasion.

ARCAS.

It seems the beauteous Ariadne is the cause,
That stirs this hopeless passion in your veins;
'Tis madness to oppose the will of Fate;
Her love distinguish'd Theseus from the rest,

B

He

He found no rival in her father's court,
 By her, he 'scap'd the snares of cruel Minos;
 The mazy labyrinth, with all its wiles,
 Slew the fell monster, who, with savage rage,
 Destroy'd such numbers of th' Athenian youth.
 Think not, my liege, you can supplant her love;
 For, tho' protection to the wand'ring pair
 With bounteous hospitality you gave,
 The solemn purpose of their flight you knew,
 You, who so often urg'd the rites delay'd
 With seeming zeal, and press'd their consummation.

ENARUS.

Difftrust must needs arise, when Athens' prince,
 Whose love should know no change, indifferent proves.
 To see them join'd, in Hymen's nuptial bands,
 My soul had long consented; nor had Ariadne
 Inspir'd a thought within my tortur'd breast,
 Beyond the first surprise—but now her charms
 With power resistless, burst upon my sight.
 Why could not Theseus seize the proffer'd joy?
 Not linger out a tedious course of love,
 Until Perithous, his friend, arriv'd;
 Whilst other beauties, now within my court,
 His easy soul, and wav'ring thoughts engage,
 With jealous rage, so common to their sex,
 Eager to make a conquest of his heart:
 Hence spring my hopes, and hence this sweet commotion,
 Perhaps, by rash presumption over-rated.

ARCAS.

When men are found, with souls of such contexture,
 Together link'd, by Friendship's sacred bonds,
 Urg'd by one will, and by like passions fir'd,
 It is not strange, that Theseus should delay
 The bliss reserv'd, by wedding Ariadne;
 For sure his bosom must dilate with joy

To

To see his friend Perithous in Naxos,
 With him, to share his glory and his fame,
 And pour his inmost soul within his bosom.
 But say, has this respect to Friendship's laws,
 Rous'd the too-jealous breast of Ariadne?
 Provok'd the fair with most becoming pride,
 In spite of all her constancy and truth,
 To slight the prince, and treat his love with scorn.

ENARUS.

This, Arcas, this my tortur'd fancy wounds,
 And to perceive the unabating flame,
 Preserv'd by Ariadne for my rival,
 Already have my eyes, my thoughts express'd
 The broken sighs, that rend my lab'ring heart;
 Nay more, my tongue have signified my love;
 But she, still faithful to the prince she fav'd,
 With all his virtues strongly prepossess'd,
 Only in presence of her witnessing train,
 Hath hitherto my visits entertained;
 Her sister, Phædra, would beguile my cares,
 And fain would soothe the anguish of my mind;
 Whilst I, the fond idea doom'd to cherish,
 No ray of hope, no flatt'ring prospect near,
 Imbibe the treach'rous poison in my veins,
 And obstinately triumph in my pain.

ARCAS.

When Phædra deigns to soothe your hopeless flame,
 The pains you suffer less indulgence claim;
 How could such soft perfection, scape your eyes?
 Such winning grace, as that which Phædra boasts;
 Whose youthful pulse was ne'er disturb'd by love.
 Her offices, bespeak a sweet concern;
 And well deserve, your royal admiration.

ENARUS.

Such is the strange caprice disclos'd by love,
 And such the rash resolves that spring therefrom,

Tho'

'Tho' Phædra boasted more exalted charms,
 Than those which lovely Ariadne owns,
 Such dazzling beauty could not move my soul;
 Whereas, a wish express'd, nay more, a word,
 Had fix'd her mine beyond a rival's power,
 But yet nor reason nor discretion's laws
 Can curb the fallies of distemper'd love,
 The blind effusions of a sudden flame,
 Empassioned souls too commonly enslave,
 And by a secret, active power unknown,
 Draw us at will, without our knowing why.
 When once the rebel love assails our veins,
 No peace survives, to calm the troubled breast.
 Of this, my passion is a proof severe,
 The tumults, it has caused can best explain
 How weak is reason when oppos'd to love;
 Since Phædra only my esteem secures;
 Whilst Ariadne triumphs o'er my heart.

ARCAS.

Does Enarus possess the throne of Naxos?
 Invested only with a false authority,
 The hand that wields the sceptre, can secure
 The quick possession of the maid you love,
 Pre-eminence like yours, approves the act,
 All opposition's vain, that wars with power.—

ENARUS.

Is Enarus to honour's instinct dead?
 Honour, the brightest gem that station wears,
 Thus coward, to succeed by base constraint,
 Why wound the nobler feelings of the mind?
 Know'st thou not, Arcas, that my soul abjures
 The mean resource, of triumphing by force;
 An act, that would authority disgrace,
 And sacred hospitality offend,
 Besides, what hopes from sacrilege like this?

Can

Can odious tyranny subdue the mind,
 Or change the fix'd attachment of the soul?
 Theseus, for splendid virtue is renown'd,
 She saw him, straight bewail'd his fate, and lov'd him;
 Vain the attempt her passion to controul,
 Her constancy all violence defies;
 And sure her soul must with contempt reject
 The offer of a heart in such disguise;
 Better, my Arcas, try to earn esteem,
 Since cruel love resists my hopeless flame.
 Great souls are known by their illustrious deeds,
 And mine, in spite of all the pangs it feels,
 Disclaims the imputation of dishonour:
 But see, the princes come! —

Enter THESEUS and PERITHOUS.

ENARUS to PERITHOUS.

At length, Perithous greets the shore of Naxos,
 Thrice welcome to th' expecting breast of Theseus,
 To see his friend, once more, must swell with joy
 His faithful bosom, which so long desir'd,
 This last, convincing token of his friendship.

PERITHOUS.

The joy he feels, is paid with interest here;
 For judge what transports must distend my breast,
 After the painful rigours he sustain'd,
 A fated victim set apart by lot,
 To sate the vengeance of the Cretan monster:
 Once more to see him in this peaceful isle,
 Whose death by all was deem'd inevitable,
 Each honour paid him, that his merit claims
 Reverse of chance propitious! — Athens no more
 Groans from the weight of this detested tribute,
 Releas'd by the heroic arm of Theseus.
 The joyful news first made me fly to Athens,
 Where certain information I received,

That Theseus here, expected his Perithous.
 Sudden, I bent my eager course to Naxos—
 When giving loose to all the warmth of friendship,
 A tender and a sweet return I find,
 From him, whom kings have honour'd with their favours.

ENARUS.

How blest is Theseus, blest beyond compare,
 Possess'd of every joy, that friendship yields,
 Hearts, warm'd alike by the same generous flame,
 Their dearest interests can with ease devote,
 A sacrifice, at Friendship's godlike shrine.

THESEUS.

Appearances too often prove deceitful.
 He best deserves to be accounted happy,
 Whose mind with outward circumstance accords.
 Press'd, with the weight of favours from your hand,
 My soul, unable to repay the debt,
 Sinks from a state of peace, to discontent.—

ENARUS.

Those acts of mine, which you interpret favours,
 But trifles are in obligation's scale;
 Yet were they such as merited return;
 Altho' your life, and honour you deriv'd;
 By special favour, from my royal word;
 One way, you might so great a debt repay.

THESEUS.

Which way? explain my liege, and teach my heart,
 How best the grateful tribute to convey;
 My ardent breast exults in the idea,
 The generous favours, which you late bestow'd.
 The safe asylum granted to a stranger,
 Beyond my poor ability demands,
 What Theseus cannot boast, becoming proofs.

ENARUS.

ENARUS.

Theſeus, beware! nor let your forward heat
 Unbounded ſpring; beyond diſcretion's line.
 The grateful ſoul, and unſuſpecting heart,
 By inconfiderate zeal may be trepann'd,
 And by ingenious fallacy abus'd :
 You think too nobly of me : believe me, Theſeus,
 What now your gratitude would lightly prize,
 Might coſt you worlds of bitter care hereafter,
 And plunge you into unexpected ruin.

THESEUS.

Doubt you my zeal, my liege ?

ENARUS.

No ! but its too licentious fire would curb :
 Be happy in the frienſhip of Perithous ;
 Enjoy the ſmiles of beauteous Ariadne ;
 Feaſt on her charms ;—but whither would my tongue
 Betray the wild chimeras of my brain ?
 Theſeus, I pray, you may forgive my ſpeech,
 Nor ſtrive to underſtand what wounds your peace:
 My glory, honour, and my truth demand it.

[Exit Enarus.]

PERITHOUS.

The king, in dark enigmas, would conceal
 The ſecret ſprings and workings of his ſoul ;
 But in the warmth of overſtrain'd expreſſion
 Methinks, a paſſion, near allied to love,
 For Ariadne has diſcover'd.

THESEUS.

I know it all, his love full well I know ;
 From the firſt moment it inſpir'd that flame,
 Which now his breaſt with mad'ning rage affails ;
 And yet, Perithous, I can ſee unmov'd,
 The ſpreading evil, free from love's alarms.

PERITHOUS.

PERITHOUS.

What would not lovely Ariadne feel,
 Did she from accident, in ought conceive,
 Despair or jealousy disturb'd your peace?
 Just now, I left the ever-blooming maid,
 On whose enchanting speech well pleas'd I hung,
 Employ'd in praises of the gallant Theseus.
 Sure, never love like hers, was found on earth,
 Scorning the perils of ignoble flight,
 To swell your glory, and her truth approve.——

THESEUS.

Would I had less her constancy engag'd!
 Had Ariadne less concern bestow'd,
 Had I appear'd less splendid in her eyes,
 This weight of sad perplexity, had ne'er
 With delicate distress, consum'd my soul;
 But now abandon'd, my Perithous,
 To wretched care, and ——

PERITHOUS (*interrupting him.*)

Heavens! do I live to hear from Theseus' mouth
 Such blasphemy, 'gainst love's religious laws?
 Could worth like her's, deserve this cool return?
 She, whose divine accomplishments must strike,
 Even scepter'd kings with pious adoration;
 Whilst you, the proffer'd gem would hold so cheap,
 To matchless beauty dead, and bright perfection.

THESEUS.

Too well I know her fascinating charms,
 My eyes, my reason, all confess her worth;——
 And love, encourag'd by the sweet conviction,
 An advocate would press me in her service;
 But love's allurements, fail to bind the soul,
 If not at first embarrass'd in its wiles
 Before discretion, with deliberate air,
 Weighs every argument on either side;

Whereby

Whereby the judgment coolly may discern,
Betwixt blind love, and sober inclination.

PERITHOUS.

Ungrateful prince ! shall Ariadne's worth,
The perils which she suffered, in her flight,
With all those train of ills, be now forgot ?
The gen'rous maid, who sav'd you from destruction ;
And thro' the Labyrinth's perplexing ways,
Your wand'ring steps successfully directed. —

THESEUS.

But for her help, Perithous, I confess,
Despair had wrapp'd me in eternal gloom,
Had not her love assum'd the air of pity,
And so the lot, to which I was decreed,
Most luckily revers'd. — To her I owe
The freedom I enjoy, nay more, my life,
And tho', to overlook such matchless charms
With cool insensibility, deserves
The keenest arrows vengeance can select ;
Yet still my heart, no secret tumult feels.
Love thro' my frame, involuntary sports,
And aims it's blunt artillery in vain ;
Whilst conscience, whisp'ring to my tortur'd breast,
Brands me in private with the name of traitor.
Alas ! how hard the conflict, which confounds
The ties of friendship, gratitude, and love.

PERITHOUS.

Theseus, I know your merit claims regard !
And Ariadne, conscious of your worth,
Adores your virtues with a lover's phrenzy,
And in return, expects to be belov'd.
Think you, the many solemn protestations,
The oaths, the thousand soft professions
That 'scap'd your lips, with such religious fervour,
Could bribe her soul, to think it an illusion.

C

THESEUS.

THESEUS.

Her benefits are lodg'd within my breast;
 My soul, in duty, with esteem regards her;
 Nay more, would love her, was my passion free;
 But the too subtle flame, knows no controul:
 Was it of small account, to leave a father,
 To risque such perils, and to save my life?
 Yet this, methinks, Perithous might content her,
 The conscions breast, is virtue's bright reward;
 But generous love, to freedom is allied,
 Nor meanly stoops to infamous constraint.
 What sprang from gratitude, by Ariadne,
 Erroneously was construed into love.
 The duties which I ow'd her, have undone me,
 And wore an aspect, which deceiv'd myself;
 But soon, the anguish which I felt therefrom,
 The artful trick, unravelled to my view;
 Too late convinc'd me, of this cruel truth,
 That love is often founded in appearance;
 But Phædra's charms, have, with a sudden flame,
 Subdu'd my soul, whilst every moment brings
 New fuel to my transports.—

PERITHOUS.

Could Ariadne's sister work this change?

THESEUS.

No wonder, my Perithous, such charms
 As those, which Phædra eminently boasts,
 Should draw the soul, by their superior lustre.
 'Tis true I love her—deep within my heart,
 In glowing characters, her goodness dwells,
 Effect of love spontaneous—whilst with pride,
 My bosom whispers, she approves my passion.

PERITHOUS.

Does Phædra own a like regard for Theseus?

THESEUS.

THESEUS.

Sure I'm deceiv'd, or else her eyes pronounce it.
 The love I claim from Phædra may exist,
 Without infringement of those other ties,
 Those soft regards, that tranquilly prevail
 Within one sister's bosom toward another.
 Passions so different are with ease distinguish'd,
 And tho' love's tumults may disturb the frame,
 The pleasing anguish soon we learn to bear ;
 Our passions mutual, as our hearts the same.
 Phædra alone, my raptur'd bosom fires :
 Long since, mine eyes the fatal secret publish'd ;
 And oft, methinks, she wishes Ariadne
 Had less confided in my seeming truth,
 Still as she would instruct me in her love ;
 Yet Ariadne, spite of mean suspicion,
 With calm indifference can see, unmov'd,
 The fond attentions I at times employ,
 When in her presence oft with gallant pride,
 A few distinguish'd beauties I've selected,
 Amidst the female circle that frequent
 And grace the court, in homage to their prince.
 Alas ! how weak the artifice, to shake
 Her constant breast, where love and honour reign :
 Blameless herself, a stranger to deceit,
 She deems the favours, which she late conferr'd,
 A shield, sufficient 'gainst such strange alarms.

PERITHOUS.

Civilities like these but heighten rank,
 And often are bestow'd, with cool indifference ;
 But want the force, to captivate the heart :
 Must Ariadne's bosom be disturb'd,
 Whose tongue proclaims the constancy of Theseus ?
 Why could you thus, the generous maid deceive,
 The fatal secret, from her soul conceal,
 For three whole months, you waited my arrival ?

THESEUS.

THESEUS.

To feed the flame, that Enarus consumes,
Which, tyrant-like, invades his royal breast,
That so, my Phædra's love I might secure,
And from a marriage, disengage my faith,
Which woes me, only with constrain'd embrace,
And would my liberty, and will enslave.

PERITHOUS.

But why, the solemn mysteries defer?
Now, that in Naxos, Theseus sees his friend,
Since time hath wrought no change in Ariadne.—

THESEUS.

Did ever violence like this enjoin
Such cruel penance on a grateful mind?
For sure, the fatal secret to discover,
Must wound the tender breast of Ariadne,
But tho' it cost me life, I will reveal it. *[Pausing.]*
What would my love suggest?—my friend must bear
The cruel news to my deliverer's ear:
Perithous best can witness my remorse,
In language, more intelligent, can paint
The conflict, love and constancy occasion;
But, as you prize the sacred ties of Friendship,
Let not the name of Phædra 'scape your lips,
Lest quick despair impel the injur'd maid,
With rage implacable, to seek revenge,
And to forget the love she bears a sister!
Fix her suspicion, near some other object,
That so by this deceit, my Phædra may
The fierce combustion of her rage evade.

PERITHOUS.

My tongue shall use discretion in its office,
Tho', from my heart, your perjury I hate:
For justly, might I dread her indignation,

Did

Did I too faithfully the truth report ;
 That task be his, who shameless can resist,
 The delicate compunctions, caus'd by pity:
 Be mine, to soothe the tumults of her heart,
 To speak of Enarus, his hopeless passion,
 The tenderness he bears for Ariadne,
 And with ingenious subtlety, to sound
 Her serious inclination towards him :
 But Phædra comes—'tis fit I should retire.

[Exit Perith.

THESEUS.

Oh ravishing conceit ! 'tis she herself,
 And grace, with sweet proportion, steps before her ;
 Whilst beauty, love, and ever-winning softness,
 Like stars thick-studded, shed their lustre round her.

Enter PHÆDRA.

THESEUS to PHÆDRA.

Has Phædra yet resolv'd, or doubting still,
 Does Theseus' ardour, but inspire regret,
 Perithous, his presence rids suspense,
 The cause remov'd, necessity prevails,
 And Love commands, that with convenient speed,
 The secret of my soul be straight reveal'd.
 All fears are vain—Let Phædra but approve,
 What greater bliss can fruitful fancy hope ?

PHÆDRA.

Theseus himself shall answer for my love,
 Tho' once, methinks, to own it, means for ever :
 The gen'rous soul, disdains all low deception,
 And Phædra, struggling with her headstrong passion,
 Dares not her heart impartially examine,
 But shrinks convicted, from th' ungrateful office.
 What, tho' I love you, shall I cease to share
 The cruel pangs that must await a sister ?
 Robb'd of your heart, in spight of all her hopes,
 And that all-conqu'ring flame, that bade her truth,

Such

Such fearful ills, to combat in your favour,
 Think you, that Phædra's bosom rests at ease?
 Whilst Ariadne, made the sport of love,
 Sees that, in the possession of another,
 To which alone she claims a just pretension;
 But why of Fate, or Destiny complain?
 The fix'd decrees of Love omnipotent;
 In vain the contest, to its power I yield,
 Nor deprecate the stroke, tho' arm'd with ruin;
 But still, the vows you made to Ariadne,
 The gratitude you owe her. —

THESEUS (*interrupting her.*)

Oh talk not of the sense of obligations!
 The memory of which torments my soul.
 Phædra herself, can witness my distress,
 The fruitless means I frequently devis'd,
 Instead of cool, dispassionate regard,
 To cheat my mind, by feigning an affection;
 A crime, perhaps, that had deserv'd your hate,
 Did not my Phædra, with compassion urge,
 The cruel task, in pity to a sister;
 But who shall dare to call attachment love?
 Devoid of every other soft emotion,
 Such as my soul conceives, for beauteous Phædra,
 For whilst my duty flows to Ariadne,
 The reflux caus'd by Phædra's soft attractions,
 Draws my too-willing bosom, to that sphere,
 Where love, with sovereign rule, despotic reigns.

PHÆDRA.

What must the injur'd Ariadne feel?
 If perfidy like this, my soul approv'd;
 Had some less constant maid, preferr'd her claim,
 Perhaps, in Phædra, she had found a rival;
 Say, shall a sister's int'rest be forgot,
 Whose early virtues, all my soul engag'd?

The

The gen'rous breast abjures such foul deceit,
 Bids me reject the proffer'd love of Theseus,
 Which otherwise, with pride, I had accepted,
 For such, is Ariadne's love for Theseus,
 And such the soft contexture of her soul.
 Despair like this, would wound her peace for ever;
 At once her quiet and existence end.
 No more your suit, with rash presumption urge,
 The consequence is fatal. —

THESEUS.

First teach me, not to love, to that excess,
 To taste of bliss, and then to bid farewell
 To all those joys, that sweet perception yields;
 First tear your lovely image from my breast,
 Which time nor circumstance can ought deface;
 But think not, that my reason can controul,
 The feverish phrenzy, of my love-sick breast,
 The flame, that Phædra's heav'nly charms inspire.

PHÆDRA.

To shun this evil, one expedient serves.
 Remove, from what offends your peace so much,
 Fly the contagion, caus'd by Phædra's presence,
 A scheme, that must redound to Theseus' glory;
 Love takes a deeper root within the breast.
 The more the fond idea is indulg'd,
 Reason approves, the sacrifice of that,
 Which cherish'd once, would tend to our undoing.

THESEUS.

Does Phædra's heart, approve the cruel sentence?
 Or would her lips a different language hold?
 Could absence, work a miracle like this,
 Exclude your dear resemblance from my breast,
 Prevent the fierce incursions of despair,
 With all those ills, in melancholy's train?
 Say rather, would not beauteous Phædra feel,

Some

Some soft contention, struggling in her breast,
The natural result of such injunction.

PHÆDRA.

Ungenerous Theseus! thus to wound my soul,
To add, to all the sufferings I endure,
The further shame, of publishing my love.
Why, cruel, would you force me to declare,
The jealous rage that lives within my breast?
The sweet disorder, and those soft alarms,
That resolution throw from off its guard.
Sure, 'tis too plainly pictur'd in my face,
My trembling frame, my burning blushes shew,
The strange commotion, rais'd by tyrant Love,
Whenever Theseus woes me with his passion.

THESEUS.

Since Phædra deigns to own her love for Theseus,
What now remains to consummate our bliss?
A sister's peace is sure too dearly bought,
If Phædra's quiet is to be the ransom.
Forget those ties, that would profane our love,
My truth, my constant passion, all demand it.

PHÆDRA.

Think you, my sister ever would consent
To sanction such an outrage, 'gainst her truth;
Whose worth alone, entitles her to hope,
The utmost, avaricious love suggests:
Did I accept the proffer'd love of Theseus,
Unnumber'd ills would burst on Phædra's head.

THESEUS.

'Tis true, the secret, if disclos'd at present,
Might wound your sister's unsuspecting temper;
But yet, 'tis plain, she has incurr'd the hate,
The fix'd resentment of the king her father:
To counteract the sallies of his rage,
To Enarus, she looks for instant succour,

Whose

Whose Love for Ariadne knows no bounds:
 Could but my Phædra work a speedy change,
 Dispose her sister to embrace th' occasion,
 To listen, to the suit of Naxos' king,
 Forget the misplac'd passion she conceiv'd,
 And with that just contempt, that suits her rank,
 Blot the perfidious Theseus from her breast.
 Could Phædra thus, provoke her cool disdain,
 What hinders then, that we disclose our love?
 "For, oh ye Gods! bear witness to my heart," [Kneeling.
 "How much I prize the virtuous Ariadne!
 "May all-propitious heaven, her steps attend!
 "Bless her, with every good her truth deserves,
 "Reward her innocence, nor let despair,
 "Disturb the placid movement of her soul."
 But let not Phædra slight her Theseus' love, [Rises.
 Blest in her smiles, no other boon I ask,
 'Tis all I wish of heaven.

PHÆDRA.

What further proofs, would Athens' prince demand,
 Than those, my tongue already have explain'd?
 Say, would the awe, that timorous love inspires,
 Damp the effusions of spontaneous love?
 Go, prince!—Pursue the dictates of your passion;
 Love to excess, lest my suspicious heart,
 Cherish unworthy notions of your honour. [Exeunt.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II. SCENE I.

ARIADNE *and* NERINA.

NERINA.

THE king, no doubt, has reason to complain,
 Excessive love like his, ill brooks denial;
 For sure, 'tis more than bare respect that speaks.
 His looks, his broken sentences declare it:
 What, tho' within your bosom lives a flame,
 Which burns with ardour, for another object;
 Yet still, with kind compassion to forgive,
 To soothe his pain, and to allay his smart,
 Could not impair the stock of love you boast.
 The day, that sees you join'd, in wedlock's bands,
 That blesses Theseus, blasts his hopes for ever.

ARIADNE.

A prudent management, no doubt there needs,
 Still to secure the favour of the king.
 Had Theseus' virtues less employ'd my heart,
 The welcome late bestow'd us, in this isle,
 The safe asylum, granted to my flight,
 Secur'd, defended from a parent's rage,
 In minds less grateful, would excite regard:
 I trace his passion in a thousand ways,
 And grieve to see him sink beneath despair,
 Knowing, my hand is destin'd for another.
 Do you, Nerina, still to guard my heart,
 When Enarus his passion would disclose,
 Be sure, to sound the gallant deeds of Theseus,
 And rouse my feelings; lest my lips rebel;
 Love, finds an easy passage to the breast,
 Which duty binds, and gratitude expands.

NERINA.

NERINA.

I see no need for such extreme precaution,
Tho' Theseus' love, surpass'd the rest of mortals,
(And sure, you claim that homage as your due)
Yet still, his passion ne'er could equal yours.

ARIADNE.

His bright exalted fame, his grand exploits,
The splendour of his valour, all deserve it;
Not Hercules himself, was half so fam'd,
Whose conquests swell the registry of heaven.
Who then, Nerina, would not love that worth,
That in his country's cause, such wonders wrought,
And ranks him equal with the Gods in glory?
And yet 'tis strange, that Phædra, whom I love
With all the soft endearment of a sister,
Can hear me praise him, listen, and approve,
(And who so senseless, not to do the like)
Without bestowing ought, in commendation.
To flatter Ariadne's love for Theseus,
Methinks! the world should echo forth his glory.
Yet Phædra sees, unmov'd, his bright perfections;
'Tho' in her presence, oft he speaks his passion,
With all the soft persuasion of a lover.

NERINA.

Is't not enough, for Phædra to approve?
Say, would you choose your sister for a rival?
The interest conceived within her breast,
Of love partakes not, but of admiration,
More justly, Ariadne might complain,
Had she less coolness, and indifference shewn.

ARIADNE.

The maid, who soft impressions can resist,
Whom pity moves not, nor compassion fires,
A thousand sweet emotions must forego;
To love, we know, is often to be wretched.

And

And yet a senseless and indifferent carriage,
 Betrays a want of every gen'rous feeling,
 And fails to render human life more happy;
 In love, this difference experience shows,
 The wounds it gives, we frequently solicit.

NERINA.

Of this, the king a new example proves,
 Whose royal breast, had not such pangs endur'd,
 Did he less love for Ariadne feel;
 Yonder, methinks! he counsels with himself,
 And this way bends his slow and pensive steps,
 As if, in meditation wrapped.—

Enter ENARUS.

ENARUS.

Forgive me, princess, for this bold intrusion.
 Regardless of the ceremony due
 To that distinguish'd rank in life you hold,
 My restless fancy, sought this hallow'd place,
 Where beauty, worth, and Ariadne reign,
 Within your bosom, to repose my grief,
 The last sad effort of despairing love;
 Nor let reserve reject my fond petition,
 Which seeks not to offend those sacred laws
 Which honour, love and constancy enjoin;
 As compensation for those pangs I feel,
 I only claim forgiveness in return.

ARIADNE.

The flame, my liege, that now consumes your breast,
 With rage unceasing, justly has surpris'd me;
 Nor has the phrenzy of its fire escap'd me.
 What can the prince of Naxos urge to day,
 That my proud heart, must not with scorn reject?
 Had Ariadne known no other passion,
 Had gallant Theseus ne'er engaged my truth,
 The ardour of your love, would cost me dear;
 But you yourself, his merit must confess,

What

What price I set upon his worth, can witness.
 Now speak, my liege, disburthen all your soul,
 The tranquil Ariadne deigns to hear you.

ENARUS.

The merit Theseus owns, is known to all,
 The Hero's valour, and the Lover's ardour.
 A thousand times, my lips have told his worth,
 He loves, nay more, adores his Ariadne;
 Nor is it strange, when so belov'd in turn,
 The Gods themselves might envy his condition;
 This sacrifice of praise he well deserves.
 Deign now, in pity to a monarch's pain,
 To lend a patient, and forgiving ear:
 When first, transported with my giddy passion,
 My hopeless flame I publish'd in your presence,
 The rash expedient, but disturb'd your peace;
 To love, I counted ecstacy supreme,
 I ask'd no wages, for so sweet a service;
 Since when, a secret passion I've indulg'd,
 Nor further urg'd my unavailing suit.
 'Till now, when loaded with extreme despair,
 I fain would claim some token of regard,
 Pity may well with constancy agree,
 The passions different, as the objects differ,
 This favour granted—I shall rest content.

ARIADNE.

'Tis needless to recount my love for Theseus,
 You know, he reigns despotic in my heart,
 Was Ariadne's heart her own to give,
 Press'd with the weight of all those obligations,
 In gratitude for all your favours past,
 My pride had hail'd you for its royal master;
 But once of infidelity accus'd,
 What value would it bear in your esteem?
 A prince, so fam'd for honour and renown.

ENARUS.

ENARUS.

Enough, incomparable maid! 'tis fix'd,
 Theseus deserves the utmost Love can give.
 But why the nuptial rites so long delay?
 Say but the word, and chuse th' auspicious day,
 Nothing to grace th' occasion, shall be wanting,
 To aid this work, I will assist in person.
 "What would my tongue thro' hasty zeal pronounce?
 "My presence sure must renovate my pain, [*Pausing aside.*
 "To see the bliss, that jealous fate denies me,
 "Irrevocably center'd in another."

ARIADNE.

My liege, I take my leave, but first receive
 My grateful thanks, for this your kind concern.

[*Exeunt Ariadne and Nerina.*]ENARUS. (*solus.*)

Sure Theseus long ere this, my love suspects,
 My grief, the strange disorder of my speech,
 The guilt, so visible in all my looks,
 Too plainly indicate my weight of care,
 In spite of all my efforts, to conceal it.
 That Ariadne has my soul engag'd,
 These symptoms of themselves, might well pronounce.
 How hard the task to conquer headstrong love,
 Reason, and struggling passion best evince!
 But when the mind dares sacrifice to glory,
 'The most refin'd affection of the soul,
 The triumph sure, is worthy of applause:
 That Theseus first should entertain suspicions,
 And form ideas of my rank unworthy,
 My faith, my honour, and my pride forbid;
 Whereas beforehand, to disclose my love,
 And so prevent the prince, in his opinion,
 Self-accusation would excuse the crime,
 Now, at the eve of his approaching marriage,

When

When all within my court impatient wait,
The happy celebration of his nuptials;
Adieu! each flatt'ring hope—Sweet maid, farewell!
Love, best, the anguish which I feel, can tell. *[Exit.]*

S C E N E II.

ENARUS, THESEUS, ARIADNE, AND NERINA.

ENARUS *to* THESEUS.

Theseus give ear; nor think me ought to blame,
That Ariadne's beauties have ensnar'd me;
Why could the prince of Athens idly waste,
The precious moments set apart for bliss!
So long delay his marriage with the princess?
But for Perithous' absence—Time had ne'er
Within my breast, such tender tumults caus'd;
But now, his presence dignifies our isle,
For Theseus thus to trifle, feeds my passion;
And tho' my tongue, reluctant would proclaim,
To what excess, I love the Cretan princess;
My looks, methinks! might evidence my cares,
In eloquence, too plain to be mistaken:
On you it rests, to vindicate my honour;
Quick! bear the blushing maid, to Hymen's temple,
There, snatch the bliss, that sweet occasion offers;
Release my heart, from love's tumultuous pain,
I'll try to merit, what I must not gain. *[Exit Enarus.]*

THESEUS.

The king has most distinguish'd virtue shewn,
To triumph o'er himself, nay more, consent
To see his rival blest'd in Ariadne.
'Tis honour's masterpiece, the pride of rank,
And suits a monarch, better than his crown.

ARIADNE.

Honour, that stimulates the virtuous mind,
And royal condescension, sweetest flowers,

That

That decorate the scepter'd seat of majesty,
 Fall to his share peculiar;—yes, my Theseus,
 Full well he knows my constancy and truth,
 And rather, than refuse to prove my love,
 A thousand crowns, with scorn I would reject.

THESEUS.

To love to that excess that Ariadne does,
 Surpasses all that fancy well conceives.
 Theseus, no other testimony needs,
 To teach him how to estimate her worth,
 Whose generous lips, with fervent zeal report,
 The faithful lessons of her constant heart

ARIADNE.

To bind our mutual interests more strongly,
 If ought be wanting to complete our joy,
 What else remains, but that my sister wed,
 Perithous, the friend you prize so much.
 Thus, shall we share an interchange of love
 And sacred friendship, by the double union.
 Phædra has beauty, worthy admiration,
 And shines no less distinguish'd for her virtues,
 Pursue the hint; adopt the plan propos'd;
 Consult Perithous; gain his acquiescence.
 I'll answer for my sister's sweet concurrence,
 Who never yet my counsels disapprov'd.

THESEUS.

The news would raptures to his soul convey:
 But, madam, shall the king, whose love exceeds,
 The utmost force of fancy and expression,
 A sad spectator be?—

ARIADNE.

I can explain your meaning—but the king,
 Who late such tumults cherish'd in his breast,
 May suffer love to be betray'd by virtue;
 A breast like his, accusom'd to disquiet,

Lefs

Less difficulty finds in such a trial.
The passion he discovers can't offend me ;
And tho' it should perplex him, still I know
A sure expedient to remove his pain.

THESEUS.

" Her goodness wounds me more than words can paint.

[*Aside.*

" It is too much for me to bear, ye Gods !—

" Witness my heart."—

ARIADNE.

How sweet the trouble caus'd by jealous love !
I shall be able to remove your doubts,
Let not your love disturb you.

THESEUS.

I would that Heaven, propitious, lend its aid,
That Ariadne could remove my grief !

ARIADNE.

Each jealous fear be banish'd from your breast !
If Theseus dares to love his Ariadne,
A little time, will teach him of his error.

THESEUS.

But then, your father, prompted by revenge,
Bending his course to Naxos, may surprise us,
Even now, perhaps, he meditates your ruin.

ARIADNE.

Say, will not Theseus prove my kind protector ?

THESEUS.

This arm shall do you justice ; but—

ARIADNE.

But what ? do you so soon repent ?

THESEUS.

I wait till Ariadne—

ARIADNE.

So long, to keep the mind in dull suspense,
Bespeaks a cruel temper—pray explain.

E

THESEUS.

THESEUS.

Fain, I would speak the truth, but want fresh courage.
 Sad is the conflict, that disturbs my breast,
 When headstrong passion fights against my wishes,
 My heart can hold no longer—Know then, madam,
 The powers divine, this sacred truth can witness,
 How much I prize the love of Ariadne,
 And sure, such love no other breast inspir'd.
 Did I expend my blood, to work you service,
 The price would not repay the debt I owe,
 And yet, my Ariadne, Fate forbids.
 In spite of all the tender truth you boast,
 In spite of reason, and religion's laws,
 Fain I'd proceed—my tongue denies its office ; [*Hesitating.*
 Adieu, fair princess!—you will learn the rest,
 From him, whose friendship I esteem—Perithous ;
 But yet, in pity to such matchless worth,
 Theseus' last counsel, deign to put in practice,
 Strive not to comprehend, what he shall tell you,
 Unless to this condition you submit ;
 To mount the throne, that waits you here in Naxos.

[*Exit Theseus.*]

Enter PERITHOUS.

ARIADNE to PERITHOUS.

What can this secret mean, say, prince, and why ?
 At one time, would your tongue the truth unfold,
 Again perplex'd, refuse th' ungrateful office,
 It wears too much the face of mystery.—

PERITHOUS.

Madam, enquire no more, constrain'd by Fate,
 Theseus must Naxos quit—the grief he feels,
 Too plainly speaks the cause of his departure.

ARIADNE.

Your words convey too well, their cruel meaning,
 Perithous comes from Athens, whence he learns,
 A kingdom's

A kingdom's sense, determin'd to exclude
 A Cretan princess, from the bed of Theseus,
 Vindictive Egeus late the statute publish'd,
 But this disturbs not Ariadne's peace,
 Thrones, and the splendor grandeur would bestow,
 Make no impression on a heart like mine,
 On Theseus' love, my happiness depends,
 Which in the eyes of constant Ariadne,
 Exceeds the tinsell'd glare of empty shew.

PERITHOUS.

Theseus to valour, adds a grateful heart,
 'Tis true, he feels your favours as he ought,
 He had been base indeed, did he forget,
 That from your bounty, he deriv'd his life.
 His countrymen may disapprove or not,
 This new alliance, with the Cretan princess,
 It matters not, since other cares succeed,
 Revengeful Minos, steps between your peace,
 His indignation, like a gath'ring storm,
 Threatens to burst, with ruin on your head,
 By marrying the king, each fear subsides,
 His kind protection, join'd to ardent love,
 Will more than compensate a father's hate;
 The very thought, to see you queen of Naxos,
 Would calm the fiercest tempest of his rage.

ARIADNE.

Dares Ariadne entertain a thought,
 So much injurious to the fame of Theseus,
 That by consenting to this strange alliance,
 Her glory would receive a double lustre?
 Counsel like this, would ill become Perithous,
 For Theseus' love, to make so poor exchange,
 But, sure you know not, Ariadne's truth.—

PERITHOUS.

PERITHOUS.

Love such as your's, no intermission brooks,
Which, phoenix-like, delights to flame unrivall'd,
All other glory, fades in your esteem.
But, believe me, madam, when I thus advise,
You would do well, to hearken to my counsel.

ARIADNE.

Shall Ariadne listen to such counsel ?
Who would her life a thousand times expose,
To prove her love, her constancy for Theseus ;
What deep resentment would his bosom fill,
Did he but know, the friend he so esteem'd ?
Presum'd to plead so warmly for his rival ;
Betray the trust, his friendship had repos'd,
And ravish from him, what he held so dear.

PERITHOUS.

The sentiments of Theseus first obtain,
Be this the test, to gain Perithous credit,
Theseus shall be, the arbiter between us.

ARIADNE.

Tho' thrones too often captivate the mind,
Could Ariadne so deceitful prove,
As to betray the man she so esteem'd,
After the solemn vows so lately pledg'd
In Love's behalf?—'Twould wound him to the quick.

PERITHOUS.

What I have said, proceeds from duty merely,
The honest dictates of an upright heart,
When Ariadne comes to weigh my words,
And sees her interest, with less partial eyes,
Perhaps her fond attachment may give place,
And reason reprobate the force of love.
Adieu, fair princess.——

[Offers to go.
What

ARIADNE.

“ What I have said, proceeds from duty merely !” [*Aside.*
Were these his words, or do I misconceive him ?
Perithous stay—my doubts and fears demand it—
Within my trembling breast, suspicion lurks,
And jealousy, with keen-envenom’d sting,
My troubled spirits, with suspense confounds.
Remove those cares, that wound to such extreme,
In vain, with studied artifice you seek,
By mystic sentences, to break my peace.
Explain my doubts, divulge the scandalous tale,
Nay more, with shameless confidence pronounce,
That Theseus, faithless Theseus, loves no more,
That some more favour’d object, rules his heart,
Which I, too long, alas ! believ’d my own.

PERITHOUS.

Madam, forgive me, if I speak no further—
The cause perhaps your judgment may discover.

ARIADNE.

“ The cause perhaps my judgment may discover !”

[*Pausing aside:*

Sure ’tis too much, for constancy to bear !
Shall Theseus, quit his faithful Ariadne,
Take some more happy rival to his arms,
In spite of all the solemn vows he made me ?
I dare not, foster such a mean opinion,
That militates so much against his glory,
By Heav’n ! ’tis false, that Theseus could deceive me,
He loves me still, and nought but death itself,
Shall e’er divide him from his Ariadne.—

PERITHOUS.

Error, too oft, in flatt’ring dross deceives,
The sweet delusion, often we encourage,
Because, it suits our wishes.

ARIADNE.

ARIADNE.

Be brief, Perithous, say is Theseus chang'd?
Is Ariadne, banish'd from his mind?
And doth a rival, triumph in her room,
Why would your silence drive me to despair?

PERITHOUS.

Words out of season, delicacy hurt,
Which oft receives a stab from indiscretion.
To this, must be ascrib'd Perithous' silence,
And yet, methinks! to such a mind as your's,
Silence, too forcibly convey'd its meaning,
I saw the trouble, witness'd in your looks,
And fear'd, my words might aggravate your pain.
From one event, new comfort still may rise,
Was Ariadne queen, she might be happy,
Next to the prince, the king deserves your favour,
Accept the crown, and govern here in Naxos,
But probably, my presence gives you trouble——
Forgive th' officious zeal, that springs from friendship,
I take my leave in duty—— [Exit Perithous.]

ARIADNE.

Theseus is false, Nerina, would you believe it,
His perfidy is clear beyond dispute,
And I, the veriest wretch, that nature knows.—
Help me, Nerina, to support my anguish!

NERINA.

From my soul, I pity you——

ARIADNE.

Who is there, would not pity me, Nerina!
That knew to what excess my love prevail'd,
Another object has engag'd his love;
When Fate had mark'd him as a certain victim,
By kind compassion mov'd, I stepp'd between,
And saved him from inevitable ruin.
This sure deserv'd the most his love could give—
He treats his Ariadne with neglect.——

But

But 'tis not possible, the whole's a trick,
A forg'd invention of deliberate malice;
'Twould tarnish all the glory he acquir'd,
Blast his fair fame, and hold him up to scorn.
'Tis honour constitutes heroic worth;
But say, what laurels would his temples grace,
Who fought ignobly, Ariadne's death?—

NERINA.

Perithous, no doubt, is well instructed,
Thro' him, you read the sentiments of Theseus,
He but dissembled, when he would pretend,
The absence of his friend delay'd his nuptials—
It furnish'd him with time, to play the villain,
To feed the flame, his perfidy had caus'd,—
And to abuse the weakness of a princess,
Whose only crime, was loving him too much.

ARIADNE.

Cruel Nerina, thus to undeceive me!
To ope my eyes, but to embrace my ruin;
Why not continue fix'd in stupid doubt,
And ignorantly, still believe him faithful?
Sure I'll run mad—already reason starts—
From treachery like his, affrighted flies,
And leaves my mind, a chaos of distraction:
And yet, ye Gods! in pity to my pain,
It had been happy, had you so resolv'd,
The spark of reason, which you gave extinguish'd,
And left no mirror, to reflect despair,
Could tender love, such cruelty discern?
What have I done, ye Gods, to tempt your anger? [*In tears.*]

Enters to them PHÆDRA.

Has Phædra heard of Ariadne's grief?
The

The fatal news, that spreads contagion with it,
 And blights the harvest of immod'rate love,
 The prince, whose truth I thought surpass'd my own,
 Within whose breast, distinguish'd honour reign'd,
 So perfectly dispos'd to make me happy,—
 Theseus is false, to constant Ariadne,
 From my unhappy lot, let Phædra learn,
 How little trust is to be plac'd in man,
 In honour, vows, and sacred obligations.

PHÆDRA.

'Has Theseus prov'd ungrateful?
 Inconstant prince! so soon to flight your charms.

ARIADNE.

Yes, he is faithless, perjur'd, and deceitful;
 Within his breast, fallacious treachery reigns,
 And foul ingratitude, with hellish fraud,
 Your sister Ariadne is betray'd:
 Abandon'd by the wretch, her hand had sav'd,
 Gods! I've no patience, all my soul's on fire,
 Did I consult the wrongs of injur'd Love,
 This hand, should point conviction to his breast,
 His blood would scarce atone for his offence.
 But whither would my jealous rage transport me?
 Must pity melt resentment into tears;
 Phædra, excuse the weakness of a sister,
 I find, in spite of all my rage, I love him,
 My heart relents, nay more, I blush to own,
 Tho' now he stood a victim to my fury,
 My partial eyes would paint him lovely still.

PHÆDRA.

So sudden a reverse of fortune grieves me;
 So undeserv'd—so very unexpected—
 Who would not pity sufferings like yours?
 Methinks! 'tis easy to conceive them.

ARIADNE.

ARIADNE.

They mock description, Phædra !

Words cannot adequately paint my grief,
 That Theseus, born with such sublime endowments,
 Should fully thus, the glory of his name ;
 I must have other proof—since crimes like his,
 Are often follow'd by as keen remorse ;
 The Sun himself, pre-eminent in lustre,
 Spight of those spots, that seek to cloud his beams,
 Sheds notwithstanding light and heat around ;
 Did Theseus know the conflicts of my breast,
 How much she suffers, who preserv'd his life,
 He too, perhaps, in pity might repent,
 Hope still remains—Phædra, I conjure you !
 By all our friendship, by the love you bear me,
 By the fond name of sister, I entreat you,
 If I deserve your pity, find out Theseus :
 Remind him of his vows—recall his love,
 Plead for my widow'd truth, bereft of Theseus,
 Once more attach him to his Ariadne ;
 'Twas heaven, first bade me, urge you to consent,
 To be the sweet companion of my flight ;
 As if your Ariadne's heart presag'd,
 The sad occasion, that implores your aid.

PHÆDRA.

Madam, I fly to execute your wishes ;
 But should the prince, to no persuasion yield,
 If what I urge, shall make no deep impression,
 Or touch his soul—then Ariadne may presume,
 Some other object has——

ARIADNE (*hastily*.)

Alas ! too well I understand you—
 Phædra, I fear, has not as yet imbib'd,
 The subtle flame, the tyrant force of Love ;

F

Had

Had but her heart, the gen'rous passion felt,
 Then with more energy, she might describe,
 The mix'd sensations of a sister's breast.
 However, do the best, entreat, and pray,
 And in the room of Love, let Friendship prove,
 A generous advocate to plead my wrongs.
 Delay not, Phædra, to prevent my fate.
 Nerina, follow me, you must not quit me.—

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III. SCENE I.

PERITHOUS *and* PHÆDRA.

PERITHOUS.

PRETENCE is fiction's register—it holds no longer,
 It would be useless all—a waste of time,
 Persuasion wants the force to touch his soul,
 Who but yourself, would have conceal'd so long,
 The struggling conflict lodg'd within your breast?
 In such a gentle, and convincing manner,
 In hopes to move his tenderness and pity,
 To woe him back to lovely Ariadne;
 And in a sister's interest, wound your own:
 But 'tis in vain, to shake his fix'd regards,
 Nor intercessions, threats, nor pray'rs avail—
 For tho' to please you, Theseus feigns remorse,
 Each time, that Phædra glads him with her presence,
 Possess'd of evidence, within his breast,
 At Love's tribunal, he must stand acquitted.

PHÆDRA.

Phædra is not to blame——
 If Theseus proves ungrateful to a sister,
 Guilt only makes a party an accomplice:
 The Gods, who know my heart, can witness best,
 How it abhors the trait'rous conspiracy;
 His love, insensibly engag'd my heart;
 I lov'd in turn, without enquiring why,
 So quick the flame, it left no room for thought,
 But spread its subtle poison thro' my veins.
 His eyes, too forceably declar'd his love,
 Whilst mine, 'tis plain, involuntary stray'd—
 But I must try to combat with my weakness,

In

In tender pity to a sister's wrongs.
Do you, Perithous, get access to Theseus,
Tell the too faithless man, he ne'er must hope,
That Phædra longer will indulge his flame.

PERITHOUS.

'Tis nugatory, madam——
Remonstrance fails to moderate his passion,
Theseus adores you, with a lover's ardour,
Which nought but death, can stifle or extinguish.
The purpose of his soul, remains unalter'd;
And tho' the task invidious may appear,
The lovely Ariadne should be told,
That Theseus' love, regards another object.
'Tis fit to rouse her from delusion's trance,
Has sovereign rule, no charms for Ariadne?
Or would she rather live expos'd to scorn,
Refuse to wed, the powerful king of Naxos,
Whose love can scarce be equal'd in romance?

PHÆDRA.

My falt'ring tongue, would ne'er divulge my shame,
Shall Phædra so belov'd, betray her sister?
Phædra, on whom the unsuspecting maid,
Fondly relied, to plead her cause with Theseus,
Her princely bosom, brooks not such an insult;
My conscience, shudders at the bare idea,
It must not be—how should I stand condemn'd,
Was I to lend a hand to her undoing?

PERITHOUS.

But see she comes! all scruples should give way.
'Tis cruel sure, to feed her mind with hopes,
Her int'rest forbids, that we should trifle,
Better to banish Theseus from her mind,
And urge her instant marriage with the king.

Enter

Enter ARIADNE and NERINA.

ARIADNE to PHÆDRA.

Does Theseus still inexorable prove ?
Say, Phædra, did no tender sigh escape,
To mark his inward penitence and grief ?
Or have I dar'd, in his relentless heart,
To estimate my love, beyond its worth ?

PHÆDRA.

Perithous himself, can best declare,
What arguments I us'd, in hopes to move
His too inconstant breast, but all in vain :
The troubled state of Ariadne's mind,
At times distract him ; but his new attachment,
Spight of himself, a sovereign empire holds,
Pity is all, that Theseus can bestow.——

ARIADNE.

Was this the only conflict that took place,
No trace of soft compunction in his breast ?
But sure, my Phædra fail'd to paint my wrongs,
The sad despair, effect of jealous love,
With all the ills that disappointment knows.

PHÆDRA.

Did you but know, my tenderness and zeal,
How much I urg'd in Ariadne's favour,
Unjust suspicion, had not wrong'd me thus.

ARIADNE.

Phædra excuse me ; I have been to blame,
A thousand weak alarms disturb my breast,
My ardent passion conjures up suspicions,
Which, like the bubble, lose themselves in air.
What will not truth, and constancy expect !——

PERITHOUS.

Madam, believe me, time alone can cure
The poignant ills, of which you now complain,

It

It lets in reason, to the aid of judgment,
And leaves no room for prejudice.—

ARIADNE.

Theseus regards not Ariadne's pain,
It sounds too true; but yet I fain would learn,
The cruel sentence, from the traitor's lips,
I am resolv'd to wait his coming, Phædra.—

PERITHOUS.

I fear you may repent this cruel meeting,
Your tender heart, would not support the trial.
Did Ariadne listen to my counsel,
She'd try to banish Theseus from her breast,
At once, assert her dignity and rank,
And never more, admit him to her presence.
To see the man you love, to such excess,
Inflexible, would plunge you in despair !

ARIADNE.

'Tis now too late, to profit by instruction;
I pri'thee, Phædra, go, and send him hither.

[Exit Phædra.

PERITHOUS to ARIADNE.

'Tis not for me, to vindicate my friend,
The sudden change of whose affection grieves me.
Fondly I hop'd, when I arriv'd at Naxos,
To see you both, in happy wedlock join'd.
I hasted here, with more than common zeal;
But judge of my surprise, to see him alter'd;
As if he only waited my arrival,
To publish, what his guilt would fain conceal,
His infidelity, reproach and shame.

ARIADNE.

'Twas all a fiction, to expect his coming,
The reason's clear, my mind might have presag'd it,
Was it e'er known, that genuine love could sloop,

To

To pay such humble deference to Friendship?
His love I thought, was far above the common,
Which time nor accident would ought impair,
And tho' distinguish'd beauties, here in Naxos,
His fond attention, and esteem engag'd,
It hurt me not, I reckon'd on his truth.
But since he dares, to make his falsehood public,
Tell me, on whom his soft regards are fix'd?

PERITHOUS.

I could not wrest the secret from his heart.

ARIADNE.

He fears my indignation, and with justice,
'Twas fit, he should conceal it.——

PERITHOUS.

What, tho' ungrateful Theseus break his vows,
The way is open to insure content,
Marry the king, ascend the throne of Naxos,
Your pride, your honour justify the act,
Why would you live an exile, and abandon'd?
Already, Crete pursues you with her vengeance,
And Minos too——

ARIADNE.

Vengeance, nor diabolic rage, nor hell itself, [*passionately*]
Can change the fix'd attachment of my heart!
Robb'd of the man I love, what charms has life?
Who could expect this sad reverse of fortune?
'Tis not enough, for Theseus to deceive me,
The cruel prince, would kill his Ariadne;
But since his scorn, would deal th' avenging stroke,
And Fate, and Destiny combine against me,
'Twere impious, to resist the will of Heaven.

PERITHOUS.

Tho' Fate would frown, on such distinguish'd virtue,
Yield not, so soon, your bosom to Despair;

Perhaps

Perhaps, his guilt may wring repentance from him,
 When Theseus next you see, be sure you use,
 Your softest rhetoric, to redeem his heart ;
 But should his crimes be mark'd by no contrition,
 Should the bewitching lustre of those eyes,
 No new alarms, excite within his breast,
 Once more, regard the splendour of a throne ;
 Accept a passion, pure, as it is ardent,
 And reign secure in Naxos.— [Exit Perithous.

ARIADNE.

Is Theseus lost, to ev'ry sense of shame,
 His friend, a base accomplice of his crime,
 Why urge this stale device, to wed the king ?
 I see, too plain, my love has been traduc'd,
 His falsehood, once, my easy soul defied,
 Revenge, in turn, shall vindicate my pride.

[Retiring, sees Theseus.

This way he comes—I'll try to be compos'd.

Enter THESEUS.

ARIADNE to THESEUS.

Theseus, come near, remove this mock constraint,
 The breast, where genuine love erects its throne,
 Nor dangers awe, nor human ills confound ;
 Yet whence this sadness, pictur'd in your face,
 That blush of guilt, that overspreads your cheek ?
 Sure, Theseus is not conscious of dishonour !
 Glory's the object, heroes have in view.
 Illustrious souls, disclaim all low deceit ;
 But if report be true, which Fame gives out,
 That Theseus loves no longer Ariadne,
 It may be, you have reason ; only tell me,
 In what I am to blame, and how offended,
 That I should seem less lovely in your eyes,
 Than when you swore fidelity and truth.

THESEUS.

THESEUS.

Forbid it, Heaven !

Far be the thought, from Ariadne's breast,
Her virtues, still appear the same to Theseus ;
I know your worth, it claims my chief regard ;
Did an occasion offer, to convince you,
How would my soul rejoice, to shew my zeal,
To testify the gratitude I owe you,
And thus, at once, acquit me of my duty ;
Tho' sure destruction arm'd its rage against me,
Theseus would count it bliss supreme to die,
In Ariadne's service.——

ARIADNE.

Has Theseus nothing left but cold esteem ?
No love, no pity for his Ariadne ?
Did I conceive a pleasure in your death,
Ere this, a certain victim you had perish'd,
When Fate and Minos studied to destroy you.
This was not all, I fled with you from Crete,
My glory, int'rest, and my rank abandon'd.
Ungrateful man ! is this the base return ?
Such services deserv'd a hero's heart:
Did I preserve your life, but to betray me ?

THESEUS.

Fain, I would give my heart to Ariadne,
But spite of me, it owns another empire,
Regret and shame alternately oppress me,
Theseus is guilty, perjur'd, and ungrateful,
His conscience, brands him with the name of traitor,
He hates his crime, can pity Ariadne ;
And tho' her saint-like virtue spurns the gift,
'Tis all within his power.——

ARIADNE.

Are these the cruel sentiments of Theseus ?
And this the base return, for all my care ;

G

What

What have I left undone, to prove my love ?
 To save your life, I stoop'd to be a fugitive,
 Expos'd to perils, of the seas and winds.
 I courted exile,—brav'd the storms of chance,
 Fatigue, nor danger could affright my soul ;
 To live with you, I priz'd beyond a crown :
 Confess the whole, or if your falsehood dare,
 Try to convince, my fond believing heart,
 That Theseus owes his Ariadne nothing.

THESEUS.

The duty, which he owes to Ariadne,
 Honour forbids, that Theseus should disown,
 I see it hourly, feel it, and confess it,
 Call me deceitful, perjur'd, and ungrateful ;
 Barbarian, ruffian, murderer and assassin,
 All, cannot equal the severe reproach,
 The bitter anguish, that I feel in secret.
 'Tis fit, you should erase me from your heart ;
 The prince of Naxos woos you to his throne ;
 Accept his hand, forget those slighted vows.
 Full well I know, altho' my heart's engag'd,
 The loss of Ariadne must insure,
 The loss of ev'ry other joy beside.

ARIADNE.

No loss prevails, to which the will consents.
 Perish the thought ! that vainly would suppose,
 That Ariadne ever could be happy ;
 If Theseus, once esteem'd her love so cheap :
 Kingdoms, nor crowns, can purchase sweet content,
 Depriv'd of Theseus, have they power to charm ?
 The empire of this world, I could forego.
 If proof was wanting, bring me to some desert,
 Some solitary isle, or barren waste,
 With thee, I'd dwell, well pleas'd with my condition.
 Theseus beware ! nor tempt my sharp resentment,

Recal

Recal those vows you made to Ariadne,
Which now, too late, I find were breath'd in fraud;
Stamp'd with deceit, and varnish'd o'er with falsehood.
Snatch from indignant Heaven those oaths you feign'd,
Perhaps your perfidy may meet my scorn,
I'll blot the faithless record from my breast,
Whilst pride, and just resentment, both shall join
To tear your once-lov'd image from my mind.

THESEUS.

Such virtue, truth, and excellence combin'd,
'Stead of regard, would adoration claim;
But such, alas! is the tyrannic force
Of ardent love—it mocks our reason.

ARIADNE.

Deceitful man, begone!
And answer for my transports, at your peril.
If Ariadne's heart, has lost its empire;
Theseus is bound, in pity to declare it,
You knew 'twas easy, to abuse my faith;
And tho' your hand was otherwise dispos'd,
You made me believe, you lov'd your Ariadne,
Your glory had been peerless, but for this.
My fond credulity has been deceiv'd,
Your vows, a heap of perjury—

THESEUS.

When first, I swore fidelity, and truth,
And to that angel-shrine, profess'd allegiance,
The vows I made, I reckon'd then sincere,
I steer'd from Crete, as heroes crown'd with glory,
Not less renown'd, for having gain'd your love,
But soon a tempest forc'd us into Naxos.
'Twas here, my love involuntary stray'd.
I've seen too much, my Ariadne!

ARIADNE.

ARIADNE.

Sure my unlucky stars, first brought me hither!
 When late the king, with fond regard beheld me;
 His throne, his heart, he offer'd to resign me;
 Tho' great his worth, he could not shake my truth.
 Whoe'er she be, that has seduc'd your heart,
 My pride, my jealousy would fain convince me,
 She cannot boast of greater charms than mine,
 At least, her love must fail of that excess,
 Which first inclin'd me to forsake my father.
 Consult your glory, ere it be too late,
 Desert not Ariadne, spare her tears,
 She once was lovely in her Theseus' eyes.
 Why would you leave me to deplore my fate?
 It is too much for constancy to bear.

[In tears.]

THESEUS.

I see too plain the vengeance that pursues me,
 Heaven has ordain'd, that Theseus should be punish'd,
 'Tis only justice, to the wrongs you suffer,
 My conscience tells me, I have been a traitor:
 All-powerful love subdues me with its rigour,
 Restrains my will, and counteracts my duty.
 How shall I speak the tortures I endure?
 Press'd with a weight of care and sad remorse,
 In vain, I summon Reason to my aid,
 Too weak its counsels, to suppress the flame,
 Or curb the torrent of impetuous love!

ARIADNE.

Deceitful monster! blot me from your memory,
 Presume no longer to abuse my weakness,
 Conduct me straightway from this hated isle,
 Where every object wounds me with despair;
 And still, to aggravate the wrongs I suffer,
 Bring me to Crete, from whence you first seduc'd me,
 That rage and persecution may destroy me.

Crete

Crete sure, will have more charms for Ariadne,
Than Naxos, where your treachery betray'd me.

THESEUS.

Is it for Theseus to refine on misery ?
Or would the peerless maid new dangers brave ?
Revisit Crete, and tempt the seas once more,
In vain would Ariadne hope to 'scape,
The fierce resentment of the king her father.
Perish the thought ! that rashly would exchange,
The proffer'd rank that waits you here in Naxos,
For the impending ills, which Minos threatens,
Effect of Cretan disappointment.—

ARIADNE.

With pleasure I could suffer—
These and still greater ills perhaps I merit,
But say, have I deserv'd the scorn of Theseus ?
The breast, where guile nor base deceit are found,
Can smile undaunted, at approaching ruin.
Why fear the sure destruction that awaits me ?
And why this mock regret, and seeming pity ?
Perfidious man ! you fear'd not to betray me.
Hope not, however, to escape unpunish'd.
You tear me from your heart ; but still remember,
To follow you, my country I forsook,
Renounc'd each honour suited to my birth,
And shall I now be slighted in return ?

THESEUS.

Whate'er of constancy in love exists,
Of matchless truth, and never-fading worth,
To this, and more, your merit claims pretension.
Love stripp'd of these, insults our noblest feelings,
Sets gratitude at nought, degrades the mind,
And tears us cruel, from the paths of duty.
The Cretan monster, whom this arm subdu'd,
Even death itself, in most tormenting shape,

Had

Had seem'd less dreadful, than the grief I feel;
Within my breast, your fiercest vengeance aim,
Strike, and prevent the forfeit, that must follow,
The loss of ever-constant Ariadne;
So shall I 'scape the fury of those eyes,
Which late were wont to glad me with their beams.

ARIADNE.

Quick from my sight! you shall not triumph longer,
No longer, insolently boast you quit me;
Go, shew your truth elsewhere.—

THESEUS.

Madam, upon my knees I do beseech you;— [*Kneeling.*]

ARIADNE.

Away, be gone! I'll use my utmost power,
To treat your infidelity with scorn.
I'll try to act as would become a princess.

THESEUS.

Adieu, sweet maid!—"Heavens, how she looks contempt!"
[*Aside.*]

"Her words, like daggers, pierce me to the soul;
"I see my crimes, my faithless passion curse,
"Lament my treason, with unfeign'd remorse."

[*Exit Theseus.*]

ARIADNE.

Alas! Nerina, he is gone for ever.

NERINA.

What would his presence profit Ariadne;
But only fill the measure of her grief?

ARIADNE.

'Twas cruel sure, thus to deceive my truth,
Then basely leave me.—

NERINA.

He only did as you commanded him.—

ARIADNE.

Could the ungrateful man so soon obey?

NERINA.

NERINA.

What could he do ? you prefs'd his quick departure.

ARIADNE.

What will not love, when swell'd to phrenzy, do ?
Despair and anger might have urg'd his absence,
And yet my heart prove traitor to my lips.
Heavens ! to what misery has Love reduc'd me,
But say, Nerina, did he shew no joy ?
Was there no pleasure pictur'd in his face ?
No cruel satisfaction, when he left me ?

NERINA.

Madam, 'tis owing to his guilt he flies you,
He can assign no cause for his behaviour,
The sudden change, when near you, but upbraids him,
His conscience wounds him with distinguish'd rigour.

ARIADNE.

My soul's on fire, I fain would know my rival,
The happy maid, that would estrange his love,
Amongst the beauties, that resort the court,
One I perceive, attracts his fond concern,
His faithless bosom, owns the foreign flame:
I'll meet my fate, Nerina, with composure;
For tho' his infidelity distress me,
His own remorse, will more than amply pay
The bitter pangs I suffer.—

Exeunt.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

ENARUS *and* PHÆDRA.

ENARUS.

I SEE his love is chang'd—it needs no proof,
 'Tis evident, and causes much my wonder;
 That Theseus could despise a love so pure,
 I tremble for the issue—and tho' late,
 I would have mov'd her tender breast to pity,
 I now can stoop, to pity in return;
 With less reluctance we can bear to lose
 The blessing which we dare not hope to gain:
 The evil, tho' severe, is cur'd by time;
 But when bright hope it's balmy influence lends
 And with propitious gales our passion fans
 Should we be cheated of the bliss propos'd,
 Despair and grief, to fill the void succeed.

PHÆDRA.

Of this, my sister is a fatal proof;
 Unless you stop the current of her fury,
 I know not, where beside, to look for succour,
 Such is the grief, that preys within her mind.

ENARUS.

You little know, to what excess I love her,
 My heart, my crown, are both at her disposal;
 But what avails my love? her steady soul,
 Her constant heart, the sacrifice rejects,
 Theseus is chang'd—he sees some other fair,
 Within my court, that has surpris'd his heart.
 I must take care to guarantee her love;
 'Tis fit, that I should answer for his falsehood.

PHÆDRA.

PHÆDRA.

The insult offer'd Ariadne's love,
Justly provokes my sister's indignation,
Perhaps may prompt her to approve your passion,
The injur'd maid, demands your kind protection,
Grant her your sovereign aid, 'twill swell your glory.
If Crete compel you to support its cause,
Give her not over to an angry monarch,
In pity, shield her from a father's hate,
You knew the perils, that her love encounter'd.

ENARUS.

The faithful Ariadne claims my care,
My love shall ever bind me to her service,
The splendour of my crown, the power I own,
My sceptre, glory, all shall first forsake me,
Ere Enarus shall fail to do her justice.
To make her happy, Gods! with what delight,
I'd spring, to where the heat of battle rages,
Her smiles would more than pay me for the service.

PHÆDRA.

How ill she brooks the perfidy of Theseus,
Is known to all, within those palace walls,
Her looks, the languor visible in mourning,
Her eyes, the soft interpreters of sorrow,
Too plainly speak the anguish of her breast;
But see she comes, with inward grief perplex'd,
Sadness, and sorrow mark her every motion.

Enter ARIADNE and NERINA.

ENARUS *to* ARIADNE.

Madam, to see you thus afflicted, grieves me!
And tho' my heart can pity your misfortunes,
Doubt seals my lips, and bids my tongue be silent,
To see a princess, fam'd for every virtue,
Betray'd, abandon'd by the man she lov'd,

H

Must

Must rouse each tender feeling of the heart.
 And yet methinks ! I should have cause to triumph,
 Since Theseus ceases to become a rival,
 Heaven best can tell, could I your love redeem,
 My blood should pay the purchase !

ARIADNE.

Forbear those protestations, generous prince !
 Hearts such as yours, that would consult my ease,
 Tho' at the loss, of what they prize most dear,
 Deserve my utmost confidence and credit :
 Then hear me, whilst the progress of my love,
 Without dissimulation I relate :
 The prince of Athens once possess'd my heart,
 I thought him worthy, nay perfection's self ;
 His virtues seem'd transcendent in my eyes.
 To say I love him still, my shame forbids ;
 And yet how hard, to combat inclination,
 We are not apt so soon to fly from merit,
 It gains, with sweet ascendancy upon us.
 His perfidy, he keeps no longer secret,
 He makes it public, to insult me more :
 When souls, beyond the vulgar, once resolve,
 To love or not, depends upon the will,
 I'll try to blot him from my soul for ever,
 To triumph thus, is difficult I own,
 And tho' it wound the heart, yet press'd in earnest,
 Time, with victorious arm, insures the rest,
 Can Ariadne banish from her mind,
 The generous zeal, the passionate respect,
 The interest, you took on her behalf ?
 If Theseus had not lov'd, my grateful breast,
 With pride, had strain'd you, to its warm embrace,
 Not long, the fond confession I avow'd ;
 But now, that Theseus frees me from restraint,
 To merit, such as yours, I yield my heart,

Where you may find, a flame, but not so fierce,
As that, conceiv'd for the perfidious man,
Whose glory bids me, to renounce for ever.

ENARUS.

Thou peerless maid!
If pure respectful Love, deserves your care,
Mine sure, might challenge faithfulness itself.

ARIADNE (*hastily.*)

My liege, excuse me, if I hear no more!
Grief, still, and trouble rend this feeble frame,
My hand is pledg'd to yours, let that content you;
But yet my weakness, fain would be persuaded,
That fickle Theseus, still may be regain'd.
A single sigh, expressive of his sorrow,
A tear perhaps might melt me to forgiveness;
But know, if Enarus preserves his love,
Should Theseus, once be wedded to another,
The day that seals his treason, makes you mine,
This I design to tell him from myself.
Nerina, haste! conduct him to my presence,
Meanwhile, the king may claim my chief regard.—

[*Exit Nerina.*]

ENARUS.

Exalted maid!
Did I but know, how best to shew my zeal.—

ARIADNE.

Enough, my liege, in pity, spare my heart:
To bid you hope, is all you need require,
Hope rids us of despair, and feeds our wishes.—

ENARUS.

To hope is to be blest'd,—“all doubts give way.” [*Aside.*]
Tho' darkness reign'd,—I see approaching day.—

[*Exit Enarus.*]

PHÆDRA.

So short a time, and Ariadne chang'd
The storm of rage, and jealous discontent,

That

That spread their gloomy reign, within your breast,
Is now succeeded by a perfect calm,
And meek-ey'd peace again resumes her throne.
Has reason triumph'd, in despite of Theseus?
Without one struggling pang, by love occasion'd.

ARIADNE.

Who shall presume, to interfere with Fate?
Theseus is base, dissembling and ungrateful,
What falsehood forg'd, his villainy compleats,
My sufferings, give him pleasure—I submit,
And yield obedient, to the will of heav'n.

PHÆDRA.

So soon to banish, from your partial thoughts,
The man, whose passion fondly you approv'd,
And in his room, to substitute another.

ARIADNE.

The pride I boast, secures this new engagement,
Let Theseus marry—I'll espouse the king.

PHÆDRA.

Can Phædra's sister, view his guilt unmov'd?
See him encircled, in another's arms?
Does Ariadne sanctify the fraud?
Nor feel the pangs, which jealous love inspires.

ARIADNE.

Before that happens, be assur'd, my Phædra,
The world, shall know what Ariadne dares.
Who would be made the scorn, of public rumour?
'Tis fit, I should disguise my indignation,
Theseus for once, shall teach me to dissemble.
I'll make him think, that I'll approve his marriage,
The stroke delay'd, will fall with greater ruin.
My rival too, perhaps, I may discover;—
Phædra herself, shall wrest the secret from him,
Her sweet sincerity, and tender zeal,
Detests the perfidy, that makes me wretched.

PHÆDRA.

PHÆDRA.

Sister, you know——

ARIADNE (*interrupting her.*)

Full well I know your zeal.——

Methinks! I feel a respite from my pain,
 When I repose, my secrets in your bosom,
 How are my projects blasted!——but for Theseus,
 The base return, with which he pays my love,
 I had consented, you should wed Perithous,
 This mark of my esteem, should make you hate,
 His perfidy the more.——Phædra report,
 The sentiments of each, about the court,
 How they receive, the sudden change of Theseus;
 But with still greater circumspection, mark
 Her, whom my fears distinguish, as a rival,
 Love may be trac'd, in various different shapes,
 We read it oft in silence, looks, and grief.

PHÆDRA.

To fail in prudence,
 Would prove, I took no interest in your wrongs;
 If vengeance must take place, say who's the victim,
 Theseus, or she, whom you suspect your rival?

ARIADNE.

'Tho' Theseus, would invulnerable seem,
 One way remains, to wound him to the quick,
 I'll force a passage, thro' my rival's breast,
 At once his falshood, and my wrongs avenge,
 What will not rage, and jealousy atchieve?
 Had he in Crete, prefer'd some happier maid,
 He might have pleaded custom, in excuse;
 But then to leave me, cruel here in Naxos,
 Dupe of his infamy, expos'd to scorn,
 Would rouse the unsuspecting breast, to madness,
 Shall Ariadne, see her rival triumph?
 Her love-abus'd, her constancy despis'd,

Whoe'er

Whoe'er she be, that spoils me of his heart,
Let her beware of Disappointment's rage.

PHÆDRA.

This is a sensible reverse, I own,
A change of passion, Phædra dreamt not of;
But tho' you knew the rival, whom you threaten,
Which way, would Ariadne sate her fury?
How put her dreadful project, into practice?

ARIADNE.

Go! find her quickly, drag her to my presence,
This hand, shall plunge a dagger in her breast,
Her dying groans, more raptures shall convey,
Than music boasts, to glad my ravish'd ear,
And still to glut my vengeance, for his crime,
Theseus her paramour, shall witness be;
Then, will I dwell with transport, on his grief,
At leisure trace, the anguish of his soul;
His tears, will rain delight upon my senses,
And pay me back, with interest for my own.

PHÆDRA.

Theseus, no doubt, may love some other fair,
Whilst she, perhaps, deserves not reprehension;
It may be, that she reprobates his guilt,
Rejects his vows, and hates him for his falshood,
In that event, the sentence had been cruel,
Could such a rival well deserve your rage?

ARIADNE.

Believe me, Phædra——
Her silence, proves her a direct accomplice,
She sees my pain, and triumphs in my weakness,
Her blood, shall pay the forfeit of my love,
I'll aim the pointed steel, within her breast,
And force a bloody passage, to his heart,
Did I, on Theseus, execute my rage,

'Twould

'Twould punish more, than satisfy my vengeance,
 The stroke that kills, would rob you of a sister;
 The king whilst reeking with my rival's blood,
 Shall straight conduct me, to the solemn temple,
 There, will I seal his infamy, by marriage,
 Still add new tortures, to his troubled breast;
 If yet a trace of Ariadne's there.

PHÆDRA.

Does Ariadne, mean to wed the king,
 And think no more of Theseus?

ARIADNE.

Is there on earth, another man, but Theseus,
 To whom, your sister would bestow her love?
 Our first affections, are too deeply rooted,
 They yield not easy, to a strange impression,
 My marriage therefore with the king disturbs me,
 But see, he comes, I must conceal my rage.
 That so my quick revenge be unsuspected.

Enter THESEUS.

ARIADNE.

Theseus, bear witness to my peaceful breast!
 My rage, at length, admits the light of reason,
 Unmov'd, I see your passion for another;
 My love, no longer sees itself confin'd,
 Since you've restor'd it, to that free estate,
 As when before (with blushes I confess it,)
 My heart, with transports, own'd you for its master:
 Shall I resist, the lustre of a crown?
 A sure defence, against my late disgrace,
 It had been madness to decline the offer,
 On you it rests, to raise me to a throne,
 To prove your infidelity, 'tis fit,
 Your hand, should follow where your heart directs,
 Mine, shall be guided, by the base example,
 You will not sure, my happiness defer,

To

To trifle thus, redounds not to your interest,
Quick, let your nuptials evidence your love !
I can, with more deliberate patience wait.

THESEUS.

Madam, I know not well——

ARIADNE.

Cease to make reply !——

If you regret my loss, or feel remorse,
There will be time enough to tell me so ;
Farewell awhile, I'll leave you with my sister,
With her consult,—and learn from her your duty. ——

[Exeunt Ariadne and Nerina.]

THESEUS.

Could Ariadne be so soon appeas'd ?
Heaven sure, declares in favour of our love,
How shall I speak the transports of my soul ?
Thus to unfold my heart, without constraint,
And urge my passion, with a lover's freedom.

PHÆDRA.

Her words, convey less grace, than you suppose ;
But first, let's see, no prying ear is nigh,

[Looking round the stage.]

To snatch the cruel secret from my lips ;
The calm you see, destruction sure portends,
A storm is now collecting, which must burst,
With more than common thunder, on your head ;
The jealous rage, of disappointed love,
With all its hellish schemes, but feebly speak,
The preconcerted measures of her breast,
With seeming zeal, she urges you to marry,
This way, she means her rival to discover,
Then, Phædra, tremble at your instant fate.
The ties of blood, will but encrease her rage,
Nought, but my death, will satisfy her vengeance,
This is the sentence, from her lips, I heard it.

THESEUS.

THESEUS.

Tho' Hell itself, inspir'd her with revenge,
 There's yet a scheme to shield us from her fury.
 I fear her breast, is far from being tranquil,
 Whilst all this calm, but threatens certain ruin,
 Let us consult our duty, fly to Athens;
 Where Hymen waits, to crown our mutual Love,
 And where, no grief, nor trouble shall perplex us;
 When once, your sister hears of our departure,
 And pride shall join, to blot me from her memory,
 No plea exists, but that she wed the king,
 The plan, is fraught with every good to all.

PHÆDRA.

But what assurance, have I of your truth?
 Did Phædra yield, to such a rash proposal.

THESEUS.

My faith shall answer for it;—
 Which time, nor adverse chance, can ever change.

PHÆDRA.

Did you not pledge your faith, to Ariadne?
 When she from Crete, accompany'd you here.

THESEUS.

'Tis true, I brought her with me—
 The too-consenting maid, I fain would shield,
 From an inexorable parent's rage,
 My oaths, partook of gratitude alone,
 To love, should know no violence or force;
 And tho' perhaps, I may ungrateful seem,
 Your heavenly eyes, first taught me to rebel;
 For sure, 'twas easy to suspect my looks,
 Oft in your presence, when I spoke my passion,
 And vow'd fidelity to Ariadne,
 The thousand, soft professions, then I made,
 You could not doubt, were all address'd to you;
 Did but occasion serve, my lips had told you,

I

My

My truth, was all I wish'd to prove, to Phædra,
I deem'd all other cares, of light concern.

PHÆDRA.

Heavens! how must Ariadne's breast be torn,
'Twixt grief, despair, 'twixt malice, and revenge;
I fear the issue—horror must ensue,
Phædra has gone too far, she can't retract;
Death, may o'ertake, but cannot shake my soul,
I fear the light'ning of her eyes, much more,
Her keen reproach, the thunder of her rage.
Let's fly from hence, nor witness her distraction;
Time, lost in counsel, but insures our ruin;
Whilst every moment, quick perdition brings!

THESEUS.

What means that sigh, as if your heart would break?

PHÆDRA.

Ask me not, Theseus——

I see my weakness, but lament a sister,
Oft, as I turn my thoughts, within myself,
Her friendship, pure sincerity, and truth,
Pronounce me guilty, in the deepest sense;
She trusted to my zeal, to work her service;
Would, I had ne'er consented to your love!
Ungenerous prince! it sure will prove her death.

THESEUS.

Is Phædra chang'd, and does she now repent?

PHÆDRA.

I cannot well resolve.—In love I feel,
A pleasing transport, which subdues my soul;
But yet, I tremble for a sister's fate,
Left to bewail her wretchedness in Naxos;
Theseus perhaps, might quit his Phædra too,
Who then could paint the anguish of my soul?
Where should I fly? to whom apply for pity?
I then had wish'd—but 'tis in vain at present.

THESEUS.

THESEUS.

Phædra, 'tis cruel, to suspect my truth.

PHÆDRA.

Occasion may be lost, in cold debate;
I will repair my fault, and fly from Naxos;
This proof, will best evince, how much I love;
Give orders, quickly!—Phædra is resolv'd.

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT

ACT V. SCENE I.

ARIADNE *and* NERINA.

NERINA.

LET me conjure you, madam, dry those tears,
 Despair, and grief, are unavailing now;—
 Before the blushing morn, with beauty shone,
 In piteous tears, you wak'd to lamentations,
 And chid the loit'ring sun in its career;
 Sure, never sorrow could compare with yours!
 With cares oppress'd, you stalk the palace round,
 Wander in vain, in search of lost repose,
 A prey to grief, to anguish, and despair.

ARIADNE.

I am, undone, Nerina!
 My troubled breast, no comfort can admit,
 His love, I thought sincere, and vainly hop'd,
 That nought but death, its force could well destroy,
 To see his passion, now so soon extinguish'd;
 Inconstant Prince!—but have you seen Perithous,
 Will he be here, anon?—

NERINA.

I told him, madam, as you bade me.

ARIADNE.

Suspicion, fear, and doubt, my thoughts engage,
 Each moment, brings a new supply of grief,
 Heavens! how my soul's convuls'd.—

NERINA.

Try, to forget this jealous rage, awhile,
 Let not Perithous see it—should he come,
 What must he think, or how would you address him?

ARIADNE.

ARIADNE.

Alas, Nerina! you but faintly know,
The sad affliction, pent within my breast,
Or sure, you could not entertain a doubt,
Encompass'd as I am, with sad distress,
There wants a theme of sorrow, to address him,
Complaint, must ever follow from the wound,
For which, no healing remedy is found.
But say Nerina, who's the happy maid?
Whose love, engrosses his peculiar care:
Is't not Cleone? whom I first suspected,
'Twas yesterday, you said, the public rumour.

NERINA.

Because he sees her, therefore do they name her,
It fails of proof—does he not Phædra see?
As well it might be said, he loves your sister.

ARIADNE.

Would he had lov'd her, then should I have known,
How, to avert my melancholy fate,
She had inform'd me of his growing passion,
And I had nipp'd it, early, in the bud.

NERINA.

To bribe her truth, would ineffectual prove;
I know it well—but love with wily art,
Within the breast, in secret often lurks,
'Tis possible to love, and yet be dumb.

ARIADNE.

Shall I suspect my sister, she, whose tears
Presag'd my grief, when I embark'd from Crete,
Before I could persuade her, to consent,
To bear me company, and sail for Athens;
How shall I speak her obstinate refusal!

NERINA.

Madam, you need not fear, on that account,
Her tenderness, defies the rude attack,

She'd

She'd rather die, than subject you to grief,
Angels as soon, might abdicate their truth,
As Phædra, prove ungrateful to her sister.

ARIADNE.

I wish to see her, notwithstanding;
Go, straight to Phædra, tell her, I expect her!
That sleep, too long arrests her slumb'ring senses,
And that my pain, is nourish'd by her absence;
Her happiness, consists in sweet repose,
Her passions, wisely bounded by indifference;
Alas! how much unlike my wretched state,
She knows no rankling cares—yonder's Perithous.
Tell Phædra, I require her presence.— [Exit Nerina.

Enter PERITHOUS.

ARIADNE (*to Perithous.*)

May I accept his hand?—Perithous, say?
Does Enarus, seem earnestly dispos'd?
And to repair the loss, my love sustains,
To free my mind, from scrupulous restraint,
Is a day fix'd, for Theseus to be happy?

PERITHOUS.

So late as yesterday, the king was heard,
To question Theseus, touching his intention,
When he perceiv'd him, slacken in his purpose,
A proof, that certain moments there exist,
Wherein, the most obdurate feel remorse,
And sad contrition—Theseus would relent,
And begs a further time, for cool discussion.

ARIADNE.

This sure, partakes not of impatient love,
After his perjur'd vows, his black deceit,
And foul inconstancy—to feign delay,
This should excite suspicion in the breast,

His

His treachery, and falshood I detest;
Added to this, his want of resolution,
At once embarrasses, and grieves my soul,
To live in doubtful hope, is sure tormenting.

PERITHOUS.

If what is whisper'd, carries with it truth,
I see an end to Ariadne's pain;
But possibly, the rumour may be false.

ARIADNE.

How! Speak, prince! give me straight to understand.

PERITHOUS.

'Tis said, that Theseus, has forsaken Naxos:
Your heart, will then from Love be disengaged.

ARIADNE.

What do I hear? Heavens! is it come this?
Methinks! I see the hand of public scorn,
Already, insolently rais'd against me.—

PERITHOUS.

The news, no doubt, must fill you with surprise.

ARIADNE.

Theseus from Ariadne fled!——
Must Ariadne linger out a life,
Of wretchedness, despair, and poignant grief?
Heavens! do I live, or doth my sense deceive me?
Perfidious traitor! curs'd, inhuman monster
But sure, he could not leave Cleone thus,
And basely quit her.—

PERITHOUS.

I know not, madam.—
But true it is, a vessel sail'd this night,
And bears away from port.

ARIADNE.

It cannot be!
Besides the king, had known of his departure,
Perhaps, to more, his purpose he had mention'd,
Yet grant it true, need it create surprise?

What

What will not perfidy like his effect,
My love abus'd, my confidence expos'd,
Heavens ! can I brook to be despis'd ?——

Enter NERINA.

ARIADNE.

What of my sister, will she soon be here ?
How will she be surpris'd to hear the news,
That robs me of my hopes—and, shame to tell,
Compels me, here, to languish in despair.
Sure Theseus has not left me ?

NERINA.

Madam, I have devoted all my time,
In due obedience to your late injunction.

ARIADNE.

Where did you find him ? good Nerina, speak——

NERINA.

I've search'd each place, my fancy could suggest,
Where 'twas most likely Theseus should frequent,,
But all in vain—he is not to be found.—

ARIADNE.

Not to be found, Nerina !
At such an early hour too, alarms me ;
Each fresh occurrence but renews my fears.
I sink, in stupid admiration lost,
And dreading to have seen too much, would fain
My prying eyes, from ev'ry object turn,
And further observation—Say, what news ?
What does report give out ?

NERINA.

'Tis said, that Theseus, favour'd by the night,
Effected his escape from hence.—

ARIADNE.

Oh night ! for double darkness character'd,
An æra, mark'd for misery extreme,
The absent Phædra, but distracts me more :
But why should Ariadne charge her sister ?
She is too tender, once to be suspected,

It

It seems a riddle—haste to find out Phædra;
I am exhausted, with consuming care,
There's room for doubt; but yet my eyes require
Some surer proof—I fear 'tis now too late.
My lord, I pray you may forgive my absence,
My spirits sink, beneath a weight of care!
Whilst every object fills me with despair. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE THE LAST.

ARIADNE, PERITHOUS, and NERINA.

Enter ARCAS (hastily)

ARCAS to PERITHOUS.

My lord, I ask your pardon—
This letter is directed to Perithous.
Theseus requir'd that I should be the bearer.

ARIADNE.

Give it me—I must insist to see it; *[Snatches the letter.]*
From whence dispatch'd? who sent it? tell me all.
He's gone too sure, Nerina! from my eyes,
And this, the cruel harbinger, is proof.

ARCAS.

Not long, an armed bark put into port,
From whence I bear this letter.

ARIADNE.

Before I read, I dread the sad contents —
Let's see the superscription. — *[Reads the letter.]*

THESEUS to PERITHOUS.

“Excuse my flight, to which my love consents,
“I own my fault, forbearing to consult you,
“Phædra to join me, kindly condescends—
“She felt love's flame—she could not stem its force—
“In pity to her wrongs, protect her sister.-----
“THESEUS.”

Protect her sister!—Is this his boasted care?
To urge my death, and kill me with despair?

K

But

But who could dream, that Phædra would be false?
 Why did I fondly urge her, to my ruin,
 To be the partner of a sifter's flight?
 Hellish enchantress! thus to change his love,
 First to explore the secrets of my soul,
 And then with triumph, leave me thus expos'd
 To all the strange adversities of exile-----
 But sure, her blood shall pay me for her scorn!

PERITHOUS.

Madam, amidst the troubles, which perplex you,
 And which description fails to represent,
 Permit me-----

ARIADNE (*hastily*.)

Away, my lord! Leave me in private,
 Your coming here, was fatal to my peace,
 And now, too sure, will hasten my destruction!

PERITHOUS.

I swear by the Gods!--I am a stranger-----

ARIADNE.

Go! bear the welcome news to Enarus:
 Stay you, Nerina, I shall want your aid.

PERITHOUS.

The king, will wonder at his sudden flight.

ARIADNE.

Could Theseus have effected his escape,
 Without his orders? 'tis impossible---
 'Twas a joint scheme, to drive me to despair,
 The Gods, the king, and you my death conspire:
 I pray, my lord, permit me to be private.

[*Exit Perithous.*]

Alas, Nerina!

NERINA.

Madam, 'tis now too plain---
 I pity all the sorrows you endure,

Then

Then what are faith, and honour? phantoms all,
To cheat the mind, and to deceive the sense!
Barbarian! thus to sport with your misfortunes,
How must your soul with inward grief be vex'd!

ARIADNE.

The hopes I once conceiv'd, are now no more,
I am become insensible to sufferings,
So great my grief, it passes just conception.
He hates me, flies me, and contrives my ruin.
I thought he might repent, 'twas but a dream:
Who would have thought, to add to my distress,
When he indulg'd a passion for another,
Fate had still worse in store for Ariadne?
Could not the ties of blood, avert the stroke?
I am betray'd, insulted, and deserted;
I ne'er suspected Phædra would deceive me,
To whom, without restraint, I op'd my soul.
Perfidious maid! to stab a sister's peace---
'Tis plain, I said too much, in my despair:
How is my vengeance blasted by imprudence!
I view their flight, with horror and distraction.
Nerina, haste, let's follow them to Athens;
There intercept their hopes---her death alone,
And that a cruel one, with novel torments,
Must glut my sharp revenge.-----

NERINA.

Madam, be comforted awhile,
Let not the perturbation of your soul,
Be known to all, conversant in the palace,
The walls whereof, re-echo with your cries.

ARIADNE.

Entreat me not, Nerina!
I care not, who within the palace hears me,
I fain would to the world, proclaim my wrongs.
We find in story, lovers have been wretched,

We

We read of faithless men, and perjur'd vows,
 But say, what misery can equal mine?
 Did pure affection merit this reward?
 Was it becoming, in a much-lov'd sister?
 Did I to Athens bend my speedy course,
 Perhaps, I still might reconcile his pity,
 We will surprise him, in the weakest point;
 If tears can do it, mine shall largely flow:
 I love him still——Yet how shall I forget,
 His turpitude, his ignominious flight?
 Perhaps, this moment, at my rival's feet,
 The false dissembler kneels with adoration!
 Heaven's! do I wake?—or else would fancy kill me?
 Methinks I see them join'd in Hymen's bands!
 Hark, how the virgins chant the nuptial hymn!
 Nerina, let me neither hear, nor see,
 What wounds so much, in prospect, and idea;
 Oh for a dagger! straight to glut my rage,
 I shall run mad——my heart can hold no longer.

Enter ENARUS.

ENARUS.

Madam, I feel the weight of all your pain,
 Torn from the lap of royalty, and ease,
 Betray'd, deserted, by the man you lov'd,
 Think not I mean to argue with your sorrow,
 Which time alone, can remedy or heal,
 I come not, to renew my ardent suit,
 But to assure you of a king's protection,
 To share the grief, that dwells within your bosom,
 And prove my zeal, in Ariadne's service.

ARIADNE.

How shall I speak, the gratitude I owe you!
 I know your love, and that I pledg'd my faith;
 But still, my liege, I feel——

ENARUS

ENARUS (*interrupting her.*)

Banish each sad idea, from your breast,
Sure, Ariadne does not know my heart,

ARIADNE.

Alas! my liege, I know my own still less.

ENARUS.

Gods! how would my soul rejoice,
Should Ariadne cease to think of Theseus,
And time consent, to ratify my wishes.

ARIADNE.

Forget the prince, I lov'd to such excess?
I blush to own, he holds within my heart,
Some little empire yet, effect of weakness;
This soft effeminacy, baffles reason,
He merits hatred, 'tis the traitor's due,
Yes, Theseus, tremble for the wrongs I suffer,
Vengeance, and disappointment urge me on;
But know, my liege, if it can ought requite,
The tender zeal, the soft concern you boast,
I swear by Heaven, by all the Gods that dwell, [*Kneeling.*
In yon Empyreum, I will keep my word—
The Gods themselves, shall all unite with me,
In dread conspiracy against the traitor!
I swear to blot him, from my mind for ever,
Nor shall his penitence, nor tears avail him. [*Rises:*

PERITHOUS.

Madam, if I dar'd——

ARIADNE.

No, Theseus, it shall never be;
Is it, for perjury like your's, to triumph?
Think not, my fury ever can be quell'd,
I have too long, indulg'd this fond affection,
Too long, lamented my unhappy fate,
He braves my sorrows—he shall grieve in turn—

But

But where, would passion hurry Ariadne?
 What folly, thus to threaten to the winds?
 Theseus, is now too far remov'd, to hear me—
 He tastes the sweets of new-inspir'd Love,
 And free from danger riots in his transports.
 Let us, my liege, to Athens bend our course,
 Quick, let us bring destruction, by our presence.
 Phædra, thro' you, deliver'd to my fury,
 Shall fate my deadly vengeance, with her blood,
 So let the day, with horror be distinguish'd,
 Appease my rage—no obstacle remains—
 The King may claim my hand, in just return.

ENARUS.

Let us consult, with all becoming caution,
 The necessary measures, ere we go;
 Then, madam, should it needful be—

ARIADNE (*passionately.*)

Consult with due precaution!—my despair
 Brooks not, the cold expedient of delay,
 Since I'm by all abandon'd,—there remains [*Draws a dagger.*]
 One way to rid me of this weight of care—

[*Enarus goes between.*]

You will not stop me sure—'tis cruel—oh!—oh!

[*Stabs herself.*]

Support me, good Nerina! —
 I feel the clay-cold hand of rigid death, —
 A chilling damp, the pulse of life arrests —
 My senses fail—methinks in dread confusion,
 Successive visions, float before mine eyes!
 I want the strength, to raise those orbs of light,
 Which once, perspicuous nature could take in—
 The pangs of sad despair, will soon be over—
 Borne on the wings of peace, and sure content,
 My flitting spirit, seeks more blissful realms —
 If you would wish, to mitigate my pain—

In

In mercy to my weakness, let me die—
No more I'll tempt the scorn of cruel Theseus—
But, Phædra too!—oh!—oh!—

[Dies.]

ENARUS.

She blooms no more—I fear her debt is paid,
Quick bring assistance, to th' expiring maid—
I see no remedy—all help is vain—
It may encrease, but not remove her pain.

[Turning to the audience.]

From Ariadne's fate we hence may see,
Love to be constant, ever should be free;
Esteem, and Love, a different course pursue,
Esteem may flatter—Love alone subdue.— [Exeunt omnes.]

EPILOGUE.

E P I L O G U E.

SPOKEN IN THE CHARACTER OF ARIADNE.

*IT may seem strange, that I, who just but now,
Express'd such grief, on my desponding brow,
Should here stand forth, alive, and well as ever,
Quite sound in heart and ev'ry way so clever.
'Tis all Dramatic fiction, as you see,
We are not always, what we seem to be;
The mystery is easy to explain;
We live to die, and die to live again;
Methinks! I hear a murmur from on High,
Below still heaves the partly-smother'd sigh,
A truce to grief, sweet tender-hearted lady,
We've had a quantum sufficit already.
I fain would cheat you of a dimpled smile,
And frankly give you counsel for awhile.
Why could not Ariadne stay in Crete?
Why so impatient? why so indiscreet?
An arrant romp, scarce out of leading-strings,
Packs herself off in search of foreign things;
Braves all the dangers, of the faithless sea,
And, for a distant kingdom, harks away!
Like any hoiden, acts the truant's part,
'Twas cruel sure, to break a father's heart.
Ye fair, in all your soft amours be slow,
Love at first sight, be cautious to bestow,
Consult papa, before your heart consents,
Nor madly venture on experiments;
You need not then, to foreign countries roam,
You'll find enough of constant lads at home.*

4 AP 54

F I N I S.

